Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-8, and 10-24 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 22, and 24 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 22, and 24 have been amended to clearly recite features of the present invention.   These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Interview Summary

Applicant expresses his appreciation to Examiners Jones and Suhol for the courtesy extended to Applicant's representatives, Edward J. Kessler and Matthew Ward, during the telephonic interview conducted on December 9, 2009. During the interview, Applicant's representatives described the primary features that distinguish the herein claimed invention over the cited references. The Examiners indicated a fresh understanding of these features and how they differ from the reference teachings. These features will be discussed in more detail below.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6, 10-20, and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Schneider et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0092484). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

In general, the claims of this application are directed to a process and apparatus whereby, in the event that a prize is determined to be awarded, that prize is ultimately allocated to a particular one of the gaming machines which caused the prize to be awarded.

More specifically, one or more auxiliary controllers are coupled to one or more gaming terminals. Each auxiliary controller in turn is coupled to a primary controller. The gaming system establishes a contributory revenue amount with a trigger (or threshold) value that can result in a prize being awarded to a gaming terminal. Typically, although not necessarily, a plurality of auxiliary controllers will be coupled to the primary controller, and a plurality of gaming terminals is coupled to each auxiliary controller. Each gaming terminal contributes to a total contributory amount via an auxiliary controller. When the total contributory amount from all the auxiliary controllers reaches the trigger value (which may be a random or predefined value), the primary controller determines which auxiliary controller provided the last contribution that achieved the trigger value. That auxiliary controller then determines which gaming terminal under its control contributed the last amount that resulted in the trigger value being reached.

For example, suppose that the total revenue trigger value is $49.50. At the moment, the total revenue amount obtained from all gaming terminals via all auxiliary controllers is $43.00. Each gaming terminal contributes a portion of its revenue via an auxiliary controller to the total revenue amount. Auxiliary controller A is associated with gaming terminals A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, and A-5. Auxiliary controller B is associated with gaming terminals B-1, B-2, and B-3. Gaming terminal accumulated amounts are received sequentially at the primary controller as follows: terminal A-1 contributes $2.00; terminal B-2 then contributes 1.00; next terminal B-1 contributes $2.50; and finally terminal A-3 contributes $3.00. The total contributory amount from terminals associated with auxiliary controllers A and B is $7.50; this is communicated to the primary controller. This total contributory amount is processed

at the primary controller, and puts the total revenue amount at $50.50. This is above the trigger value of $49.50, and as such, a prize is to be awarded. The primary controller determines that auxiliary controller A contributed the amount that enabled the total contributory amount to reach the trigger value.

Auxiliary controller A then reviews the data and determines that terminal A-3 was the particular terminal that contributed the amount that caused the trigger value to be reached (that amount was responsible for the total revenue amount moving from $47.50 to $50.50). Thus, auxiliary controller A determines that terminal A-3 should be awarded the prize.

The features of the invention described above are incorporated into the claims presented herein. For example, claim 1 recites at least the following features not found in Schneider:

> identifying a particular one of the total contributory amounts that caused the total contributory revenue to reach the trigger value; and

> identifying the particular one of the auxiliary controllers that provided the particular total contributory amount;

> . . . .

> identifying a particular one of the gaming terminals that provided the particular one of the gaming machine accumulated amounts; and

> determining that a prize is to be allocated to that particular one of the gaming terminals.

Claims 22 and 24 contain analogous features not found in Schneider.

In Schneider, once a prize is determined to be awarded, the identification of a gaming terminal (EGM) award of a prize is based on a two-stage random process. First, the primary controller (master server) randomly chooses an auxiliary controller (slave server), as discussed at paragraph [0025] of Schneider. Then the randomly chosen auxiliary controller (slave server) randomly chooses a gaming terminal [EGM] to which the prize is to be awarded, as discussed at paragraph [0026].

Schneider teaches the possibility of influencing the random selection process based on various parameters. However, it nevertheless remains a random selection process.

As noted, in Schneider, once a prize is determined to be awarded, the identification of a gaming terminal (EGM) award of a prize is based on a two-stage random process. On the other hand, the present claims are directed to a scenario where, once a prize is determined to be awarded, the identification of a gaming terminal (EGM) award of a prize is based on a predetermined non-random process, which identifies the gaming terminal that caused the prize to be awarded. That is, unlike in Schneider, the claimed invention provides a cause-and-effect relationship between activity at a gaming terminal, and the allocation of the prize to that gaming terminal, even through the decision to award that prize occurred at a primary controller.

Claims 2-6 and 10-18 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Claim 23 depends from claim 22. These dependent claims are patentable over Schneider for at least the same reasons as their respective independent claims in addition to their own respective features.

For the reasons set forth above, it is clear that claims 1-6, 10-18, and 22-24 recite features that are nowhere found in Schneider. Schneider cannot be applied to reject the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Schneider in view of Karmarkar (U.S. Patent No. 6,508,709). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 7 depends from claim 1 and incorporates all of the features recited in claim 1. For reasons set forth above, it is Applicant's position that Schneider does not teach or suggest specific features recited in claim 1. Karmarker contains no teaching or suggestion that overcomes the deficiencies of Schneider with respect to claim 1. Therefore, the combination of Schneider and Karmarker cannot render claim 7 obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Schneider in view of Giobbi (U.S. Pub 2003/0045354). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 depends from claim 1 and incorporates all of the features recited in claim 1. For reasons set forth above, it is Applicant's position that Schneider does not teach or suggest specific features recited in claim 1. Giobbi contains no teaching or suggestion that overcomes the deficiencies of Schneider with respect to claim 1. Therefore, the combination of Schneider and Giobbi cannot render claim 8 obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Schneider. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 19-20 depend from claim 1 and incorporate all of the features recited in claim 1. For reasons set forth above, it is Applicant's position that Schneider does not teach or suggest specific features recited in claim 1. Whether or not it "is a matter of design choice to a person having ordinary skill in the art to perform the action every 2 to 5 seconds," an hypothesis to which Applicant does not accede, this argument is irrelevant to the herein claimed invention. For reasons set forth above, parent claim 1 recites features nowhere taught or suggested by Schneider. Therefore, Schneider cannot render claims 19-20 obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Schneider et al. in view of Olsen (U.S. Patent No. 6,110,043). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 21 depends from claim 1 and incorporates all of the features recited in claim 1. For reasons set forth above, it is Applicant's position that Schneider does not teach or suggest specific features recited in claim 1. Olsen contains no teaching or suggestion that overcomes the deficiencies of Schneider with respect to claim 1. Therefore, the combination of Schneider and Olsen cannot render claim 21 obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.
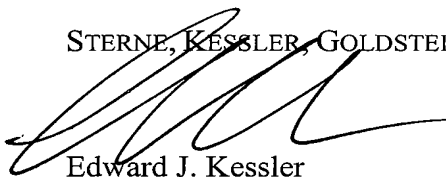
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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